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WASHINGTON, DC- U.S. Representative Charlie Melancon offered the following comments about the Deep Ocean Energy Resources (DOER) Act, which will be voted on by the full House of Representatives either Thursday or Friday of this week (also see attached radio actuality):

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"The DOER bill is very important to the entire country. As of this period in time, we have no energy policy. We have agriculture policy that's in place that maintains safe food at a fair price, but we have not had an energy policy. This bill will hopefully provide for this country to have a future in producing and being self sufficient in terms of energy. That means lower prices at the pump, that means lower prices for natural gas and manufacturers, that means lower prices for natural gas and fuel oils for home heating. It just means a better United States.

"The states that are concerned with drilling offshore, and I understand the reservations, but the offshore drilling is so clean and the technology is so great these days that the record is phenomenal. Once we get the people from other states that are reluctant to drill out to see rigs, out to see the industry, to see what it does and exactly what it is, I think we'll be able to move them.

"But for right now, we've given all the states that are coastal an opportunity to maintain the moratoria for five years at a time and then at any time that they decide that they are willing to share revenues and to allow offshore drilling, their legislature can act and that will provide for the people of each state to speak and determine their future for not only providing energy for this country but providing for revenue sharing."

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Congressman Melancon and other leading members of the House Resources Committee negotiated the comprehensive DOER Act from the more than two dozen Outer-Continental Shelf-related bills introduced this Congress. The DOER Act is a bipartisan bill giving coastal states the authority to ban energy production up to 100 miles from their shorelines.

The DOER Act also gives coastal states the authority to allow energy production, if desired, and benefit from increased revenue from shared royalties. The bill will phase in an eventual 50% share of royalties from drilling in federal waters off Louisiana's coast. Currently, Louisiana receives only a small percentage of the $6 to $8 billion in royalties the federal treasury accrues every year from drilling in federal waters, despite the fact that Louisiana must shoulder the burden of environmental damage, including an eroding coastline, and the cost of infrastructure (ports, highways, etc) that result from the state's support for this industry.

The compromise will also alter the restrictions on gas and oil drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf, lowering energy costs increasing domestic energy production and reducing U.S. dependence on foreign oil. The agreement establishes the following guidelines:

- 0-50 miles offshore: Permanent moratoria on oil and gas production, unless a state legislature enacts legislation to opt out of the moratoria.
- 50-100 miles offshore: Moratoria on oil production until June 30, 2010. Moratoria on gas production for one year after law is enacted. After these dates, the moratoria will be lifted UNLESS the state legislature enacts legislation to continue the moratoria.

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